

BLESSINGS ALWAYS

November 24, 2021

Association Minister Message

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HOPE. “Now when these things begin to happen, stand up straight and raise your heads, because your redemption is near.” (Luke 21:28, CEB). How often have we heard or said, “*HOPE* you feel better.” “*I HOPE* the best for you.” “*HOPE* the weather changes.” Each of these comments has an element of doubt or fear or failing. Yet *HOPE* can be an act of dreams realized or possibilities fulfilled.

Family Holiday Dinners are both expectation and adventure, with *HOPE* of joyous celebration of family being together. The expectation is that we *HOPE* we find delicious food such as meats hand carved at the table, vegetables, mom’s homemade dill and sweet pickles, homemade dinner rolls with butter, homemade jams and jellies, a giant bowl full of mashed potatoes made with both fresh cream and butter, and an abundance of dessert choices including homemade pies, cakes and sticky buns. Best of all, though, is family being together with all the chatter and laughter around the table. As more people are added to the family, the adventure is always to meet and welcome someone new to the table with the *HOPE* we like them and they like to be with us and we fit together.

The First Sunday of Advent has traditionally focused on *HOPE*. During these tumultuous times in the world, we *HOPE* for peace among all people, hunger eliminated, wars ending, respect for one another, healing of the nations. We *HOPE* for healthy minds, bodies and spirits. There is *HOPE* that unconditional love will be experienced and given between others and ourselves. Three pillars hold us up: faith, *HOPE* and love, and without the solid pillar of love the other two are weak and tenuous. *HOPE* for Christians is God’s way or will being done in and through us. *HOPE* is more than the figment of our imaginations for we need to intentionally allow God’s Spirit to move among us, in us and through us. We bring about *HOPE* realized when we love God with our whole being and love our neighbors as ourselves. *HOPE* is the act of caring for one another and welcoming one another as family, all God’s children as brothers and sisters without imposing limits on love. We have this *HOPE!* To God be the glory! ***BLESSINGS ALWAYS!***